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November 30, 1998

48031

The Honorable John Breaux  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Breaux:

OST-98-4775-34

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
98 DEC 11 PM 3:46  
DOCKET SECTION

The recent **decision** of major U.S. airlines to cap commissions at \$100 on international airfares is just one more step in the airlines all-out assault to drive the travel agent **from the marketplace**. By forcing us from the marketplace, consumers will have no choice **but to deal with the airlines** directly through 800 numbers and the Internet. **This will** ultimately result in the consumer paying more money for their airline tickets. **This** fact was recently confirmed in the "20/20" television program which **clearly** illustrated that when you removed the travel agency from the scene, **the airlines can** over charge the consumer at will.

I am deeply concerned about what the airlines are doing to force the traveling public to deal directly with them- through their 800 numbers and the Internet. The airlines **do not want the** public to have sources of unbiased information on airfares readily available to them. **We**, the travel agents are the only ones who provide the consumer with **complete** and unbiased comparative fare and schedule information today.

The airlines' new commission policy simply fuels the fires of concern about the lack of airline **competition** in today's marketplace with its fortress hub system and controls **over the computer** reservation systems. Please write the Secretary of Transportation **and the Attorney General** asking them to take the necessary steps to prevent **these monopolistic** practices of airlines from harming the travel consumer.

Sincerely,

Brennan Bridgeman-Bawmer

p.s. I find it **hard to believe** that the government is taking Bill Gates to trial for trying to put **2 companies** out of business. The airlines are trying to put an entire industry **out of business** and **no one** cares!